

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION

March 24, 2005 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

The Contemporary English Version is one of the versions frequently quoted by Rick Warren and other popular evangelical leaders today. It was produced by the American Bible Society. The New Testament was published in 1991 and the entire Bible in 1995. The CEV was reviewed by “all English-speaking Bible Societies and over forty United Bible Societies translation consultants around the world.” The CEV is also called “The Bible for Today’s Family.”

The head of the CEV translation team, composed of “100 translators, English-language specialists, and biblical authorities,” was Barclay Moon Newman (1931-), who also assisted Robert Bratcher in the translation of the Today’s English Version. Newman is a Southern Baptist “clergyman.” He holds a Ph.D. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and has been Senior Translator for the American Bible Society since 1989. He has also been United Bible Societies Translation Consultant in the Asia Pacific region for decades. Beginning in 1984, Newman planned and organized the CEV project with the aid of Dr. Eugene A. Nida.

Newman is the author of many books on the subject of Bible texts and versions, including a Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament and five of the UBS Helps for Translators Series (Gospel of John with Eugene Nida, Acts with Eugene Nida, Romans with Nida, and Joshua with Bratcher).

The CEV is a “dynamic equivalency” version aimed at the fourth grade reading level and designed to be understood by children and by those unfamiliar with the Bible. It is impossible, of course, to translate the Bible faithfully and accurately so that children or the unsaved can understand it without assistance, for the simple fact that it’s Author, the Spirit of God, did not give the Scripture at that level.

Newman says that when shopping for Bibles, people should flip them open and try to read a few verses aloud: “Ask yourself: Is the text easy on the eyes? Is it easy to read aloud? Are the words and sentence patterns familiar to you? Does it catch your interest? If a person finds just the right Bible, a chemistry should develop between the text and the reader. Most of all, you want to know: Does this sing to my heart and soul?” (David Crumm, “Publishers target women, business executives, even cowboys in effort to market the Scriptures,” Detroit Free Press, November 12, 2000).

Key theological words, including *grace*, *justification*, *righteousness*, *sanctification*, *redemption*, *atonement*, *repentance*, and *covenant*, are avoided in the CEV. *Time* magazine called it “the graceless Bible” (May 6, 1991).

The CEV is a feminized translation that incorporates “inclusive language,” avoiding the translation of “man” and “he” in thousands of places. In Genesis 2:18, Eve is called a “partner” instead of “helpmeet” or “helper.” In three key passages -- 1 Pet. 3:1; Col. 3:18; and Eph. 5:22 -- women are advised to “put their husbands first” rather than to “submit” or “obey.” In 1 Cor. 11:10, the CEV says the woman’s hair is a sign of “her authority.”

Newman is a modernist who denies the supernatural, infallible inspiration of Holy Scripture.

In the February-March 2001 issue of the American Bible Society *Record*, Newman claimed that the account of Adam and Eve is not historical. He said there is “no hint that the narrative of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden ... was intended literally as a ‘true’ story. On the other hand, the evidence is overwhelming that it should be understood figuratively as a ‘truth’ story.” This is the modernistic mumbo jumbo that the Bible is true even though it is not true! If the account of Adam and Eve is not historical, Jesus Christ was either deceived or a liar, for He taught that it is true. Further, if the account of Adam and Eve is not historical, there was no literal fall and the rest of the Bible becomes nonsense.

Newman joins his close friends Robert Bratcher and Eugene Nida in denying the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. *A Translator’s Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, which Newman co-authored with Nida, says: “...‘blood’ is used in this passage [Romans 3:25] in the same way that it is used in a number of other places in the New Testament, that is, to indicate a violent death. ... Although this noun [propitiation] (and its related forms) is sometimes used by pagan writers in the sense of propitiation (that is, an act to appease or placate a god), it is never used this way in the Old Testament.” Newman and Nida are wrong. The sacrifice of Christ was not just a figure; it WAS a placation of God, of His holiness and of the righteous demands in His law. Christ’s sacrifice WAS a commercial transaction between Christ and God, and was NOT merely a figure of the cost in terms of suffering. The sacrifice of Calvary was a true sacrifice, and that sacrifice required the offering of blood—not just a violent death. Blood is blood and death is death, and we believe that God is wise enough to know which of these words should be used. Romans 5:8-10 teaches us that salvation required BOTH the blood and death of Christ. Had Christ died by strangulation, though it would have been a violent death, it would not have atoned for sin because blood is required. There is no grace without a true propitiation. No wonder the word “grace” means so little to Newman. Propitiation means “satisfaction” and refers to the fact that the sin debt was satisfied by the blood atonement of Christ. The great difference between the heathen concept of propitiating God and that of the Bible is this—the God of the Bible paid the propitiation Himself through His own

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Sacrifice, whereas the heathen thinks that he can propitiate God through his own human labors and offerings. The fact remains, though, that God did have to be propitiated through the bloody death of His own sinless Son.

Not surprisingly, Newman despises Biblical fundamentalism. The following report is from *The Fundamentalist Digest*, Nov.-Dec. 1997: "In an article published in the Oct. 16, 1997 issue of *Baptists Today*, Barclay Newman, the senior translations officer for the American Bible Society, berated Biblical fundamentalists by claiming that fundamentalists place a 'claustrophobic framework' (p. 6) upon the Scripture. Insinuating that fundamentalists have a deficient spiritual mentality, Newman writes: 'Unfortunately the mentality of fundamentalism tends to foster a "claustrophobic framework," a literal, legalistic interpretation which often suffocates scripture and fails to see the 'larger picture' for their false notions of masculine superiority.' According to Newman, these 'false notions of masculine superiority' are most evident in the fundamentalist 'manipulation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 for the exploitation of women by forbidding them equal opportunity for ministry in the churches.' Newman claims that Paul's admonitions in 1 Tim. 2 and also 1 Cor. 14:34-35 are 'not for every situation' and that they 'do not prescribe what must be done in every church of every generation.' In his conclusion, Newman pleads with his readers not to allow themselves to remain prisoners of 'fundamentalism's claustrophobic framework' and 'suffocating framework,' which would 'refuse half of the human race the opportunity for Christian ministry simply because of a certain birth defect by which they were born female.' The real problem listed above, however, is not fundamentalism's literalism, but Newman's liberalism. The dilemma is not fundamentalism's "claustrophobic framework" but Newman's catastrophic foolish words; it is not fundamentalism's "exploitation" of Scripture, but Newman's embezzlement of Scripture that is the issue. Biblical Fundamentalists simply believe that Paul wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that his words were inspired, infallible and inerrant (2 Tim. 3:16-17). While the scripture teaches a divinely granted equality of persons (Gen. 1:26-27, Eph. 5:21), it also teaches a divinely given distinction of position. Two heads make a monstrosity! In the family women should be submissive to their spouse's leadership, and in the church they should be in subjection to the shepherd's leadership. Newman did not refer to 1 Tim. 3, where Paul stated that 'If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.' The qualification that a bishop must 'be the husband of one wife' is impossible for a female to fulfill! (Unless one accepts the wicked sexual perversions being promulgated by apostate liberals.)" (*The Fundamentalist Digest*, Nov.-Dec. 1997).

EXAMPLES OF THE CORRUPTION OF GOD'S WORDS

The following examples are from Ian Paisley's "The Contemporary English Version Bible – The Latest in the Perversion of the Scriptures of Truth in the English Tongue." Paisley warns: "Yet another colossal lie is being sold by the Ecumenical World in the publishing of another perversion of the Holy Scriptures, in the C.E.V. ... The Bible

Societies who have made their perversions of the Scriptures say what the Bible does not say at all and are guilty of tampering with God's Holy Word. Their Bible, the C.E.V., can be renamed the Contemptuous English Version and should be utterly rejected. The devil tried by misquotation to make the Scripture speak a lie to the Lord Jesus in his temptation and the same devil by the C.E.V. is endeavouring, aided by the apostate Bible Societies, to make the scriptures speak lies in hypocrisy. May God confound him and all his works and workers!"

GENESIS 3:15

KJV: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

CEV: You and this woman will hate each other: Your descendents and hers will always be enemies. One of hers will strike you on the head and you will strike him on the heel.

"If ever there was an attempt to destroy the productive prophecy concerning the Person and Work of Christ this is it. By changing 'It' to 'one of hers' the verse ceases to speak of the special seed of the woman. Moreover the suffering of the Cross-work is undermined by the removal of the word 'bruise' from the text" (Paisley).

GENESIS 49:10

KJV: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

CEV: You will have power and rule until the nations obey you and come bringing gifts.

"The C.E.V. deletes entirely 'until Shiloh comes' and 'unto him shall the gathering of the people be'. It removes the sceptre altogether and dismisses the lawgiver" (Paisley).

ISAIAH 9:6

KJV: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

CEV: A child has been born for us. We have been given a son who will be our ruler. His names will be Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of peace.

"Notice how the C.E.V. seeks to take away entirely one of the precious names of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'Wonderful' made into an adjective to 'Adviser' and thus deleted as one of Christ's titles. Again this is without any textual authority whatsoever" (Paisley).

MICAH 5:2

KJV: But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee he shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler of Israel whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

CEV: Bethlehem Ephratah, you are one of the smallest towns, in the nation of Judah. But the Lord will choose one of your people to rule the nation – Someone whose family goes back to ancient times.

“The C.E.V. makes Christ a creature of time. The true Christ is from everlasting to everlasting God” (Paisley).

MALACHI 3:1

KJV: Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

CEV: Then suddenly the Lord you are looking for will appear in his temple. The messenger you desire is coming with my promise and he is on his way.

“The C.E.V. completely alters the great testimony of the verse to our Lord’s Deity and Advent. Notice the Lord is the messenger of the covenant and He has come to His temple according to the faithful A.V. rendering. Not so the C.E.V., The Lord will appear in His temple but the messenger is on His way. According to the C.E.V. the Lord and the Messenger are not one and the same person. Here we have the confusion of error” (Paisley).

ROMANS 9:5

KJV: Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

CEV: They have those famous ancestors, who were also the ancestors of Jesus Christ. I pray that God who rules over all, will be praised forever. Amen.

“This text has always been a Gibraltar for Trinitarianism. The C.E.V. version is a tremendous triumph for the Unitarians, who have long contended that these words do not ascribe Deity to Christ but are rather a benediction to God. The A.V. rendering is the perfectly natural one, and as such was universally translated by the ancient Church, by all the Reformers, by the Puritans and indeed by all who believe in the Deity of Christ. The C.E.V. renders instead of rendering the text and instead of Christ being ‘over all God blessed for ever’ the later part of the text is taken to be a doxology having no reference to the Deity of the Son of God whatsoever. The term ‘the Son of God’ expresses the co-equality of the Son with the Father. This is evident from John 10:33 where the Jews took up stones to stone Christ because He said He was the Son of God. ‘The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for a blasphemy; and because that

thou, being a man, makest thyself God.' The term 'The Son of God' then, refers to the Deity of Christ as well as to His relationship with the Father" (Paisley).

JOHN 6:69

KJV: And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

CEV: We have faith in you, and we are sure that you are God's Holy One.

"The C.E.V. removes 'the Son of the Living God' and replaces it with 'God's Holy One'" (Paisley). [This translation is based on the reading of the corrupt Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts that are preferred by modern textual critics.]

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